AKIRA 2™

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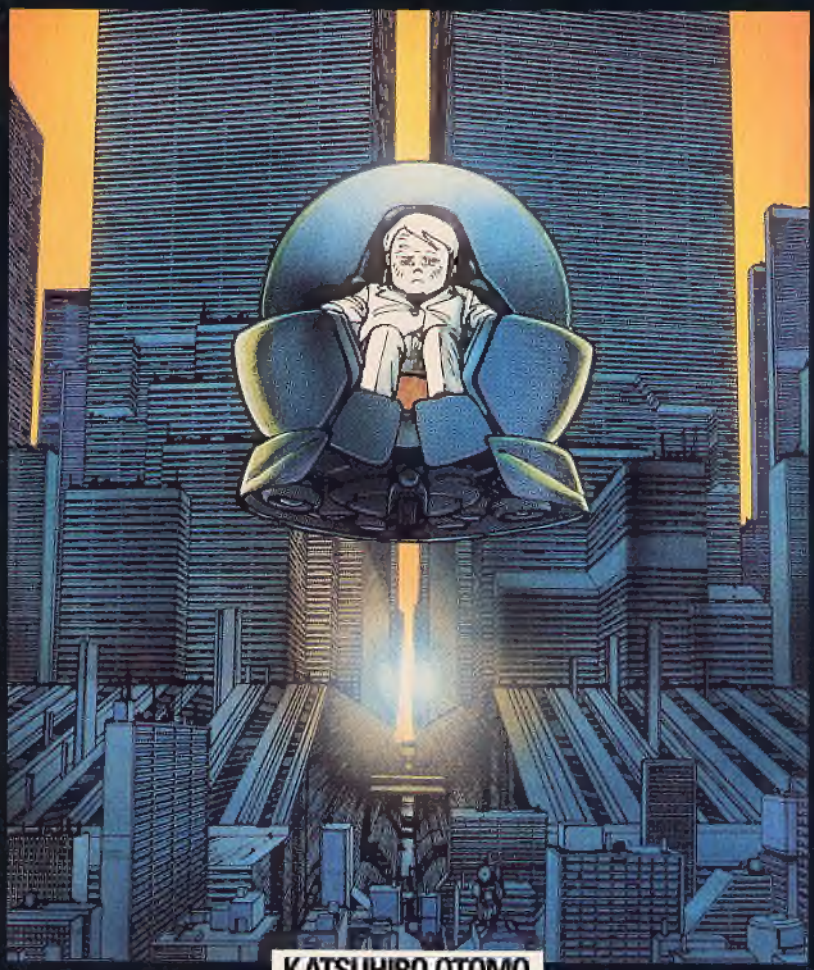

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 2

PURSUIT

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo,** plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends—teenaged delinquents from the local vocational school—have made an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the site and found far more than they expected. In an area said to be totally deserted, they encounter a strange, wizen-faced child, known only as **Number 26.** He is terrified of something and is possessed of extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

Kaneda's gang find themselves in trouble with the authorities following the incident, and learn, to their surprise, that the "police" they encountered after the accident were not normal officers, but part of some secret concern. Moreover, **Tetsuo**, who they believed had been taken to a hospital, has disappeared.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** brazenly attempts to pick up **Kay**, a strange girl who catches his fancy. **Kay**, however, is not interested. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance organization, dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

During the mayhem that ensues, both the delinquents and the resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26**, and again he uses his powers, to catastrophic effect. Both groups are scattered, but first **Ryu** and then **Kaneda** re-encounter **Number 26**. Ryu attempts to reassure the paranormal boy, but **Kaneda** is anxious to punish him for injuring **Tetsuo**.

As they argue, the mysterious soldiers pursuing **Number 26** reach the scene, armed and ready.

Kaneda Number 26 Kay Tetsuo

WHAM
AFTER THEM!!
DAMN!
BLAM
HUNH--?
BLAM
BLAM
K-ZING
ZING
ZING
DON'T SHOOT! I'M NOT THE ONE YOU'RE AFTER!!
OH, NO!!!!

IT'S A DEADEND...
UHNH!
YOU IN THERE! FREEZE! PUT YOUR HANDS UP!
DON'T MAKE A MOVE. THROW DOWN YOUR GUN.
click
!
STOP! DON'T...

BLAM
WHAT--?!
THAK
M-MISTER...?
HEY...
COME ON, THIS WAY! FOLLOW ME!

WHOA--!
THUNK
SKREE
BLAM
THEY'RE IN THE SHOPPING CENTER!
CIRCLE AROUND THE OTHER SIDE AND CUT THEM OFF!

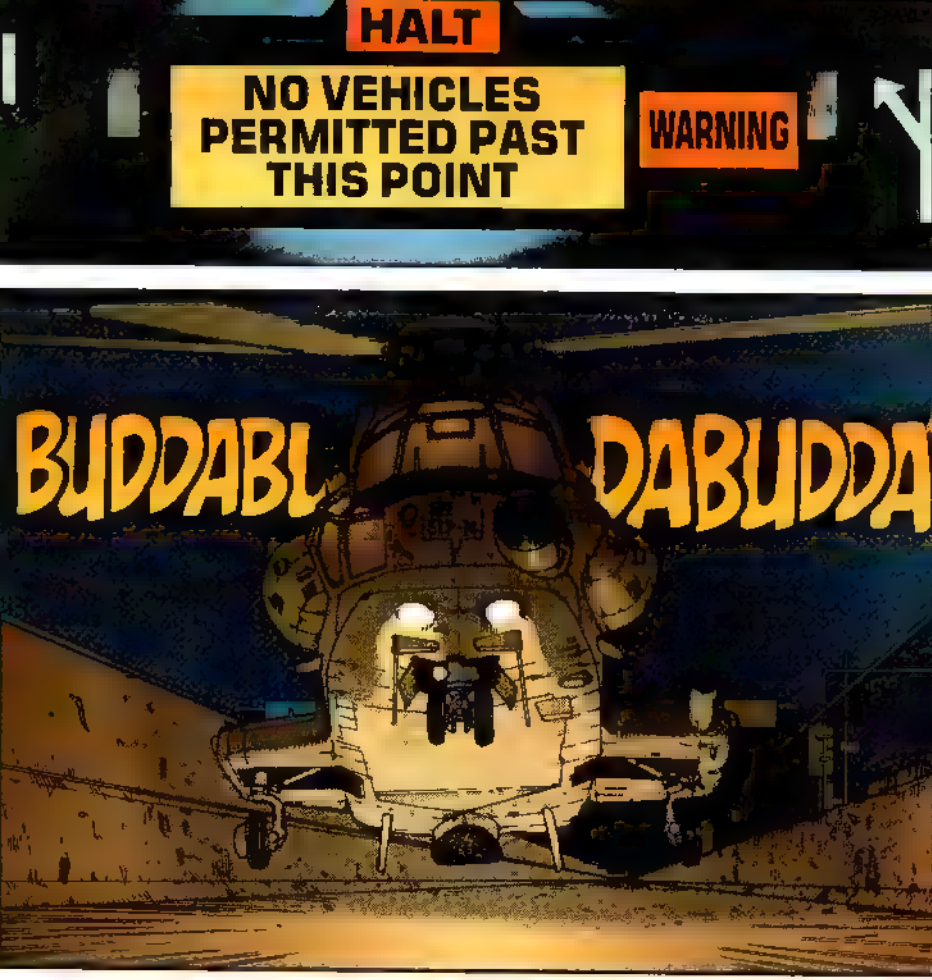
CRASH
SPLAT
SPLAT
HEY!!
COME BACK HERE, YOU MANIAC!!
IT APPEARS WE'VE FOUND NUMBER 26.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "APPEARS"?
THERE HAS BEEN NO POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION, BUT OUR FORCES ARE IN PURSUIT OF THEM NOW. THEY... HAVE A GUN.
"THEY"...?

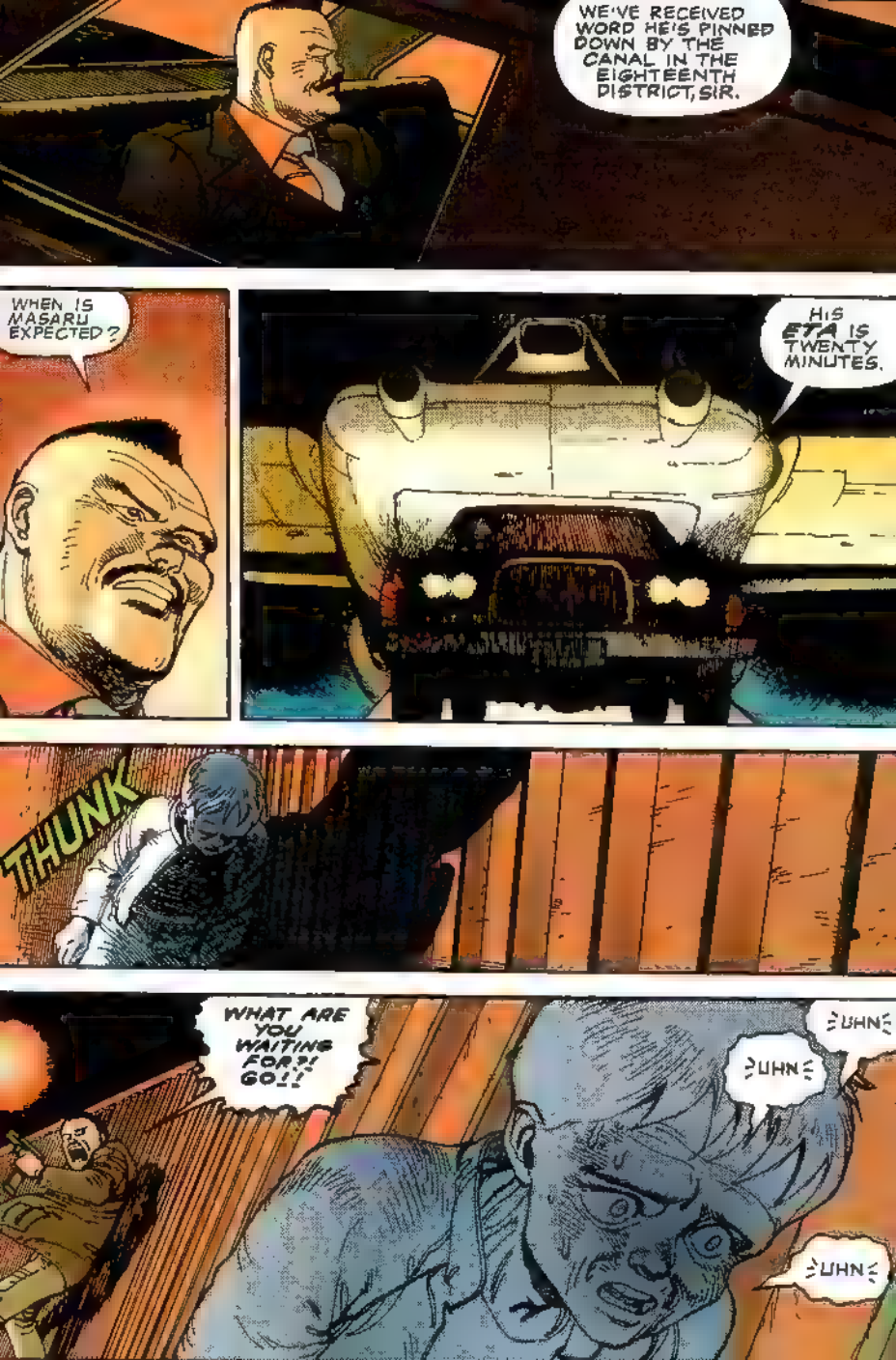
VERY WELL. CONTACT LABO. TELL HIM WE'LL BE NEEDING MASARU.
M-MASARU--?!
BUT... BUT MASARU IS--!
"MASARU MAY SUCCEED WHERE ONE HUNDRED ARMED MEN HAVE FAILED ME.
"NOW STOP WASTING TIME AND OBEY ME!!"
"Y-YESSIR!!"

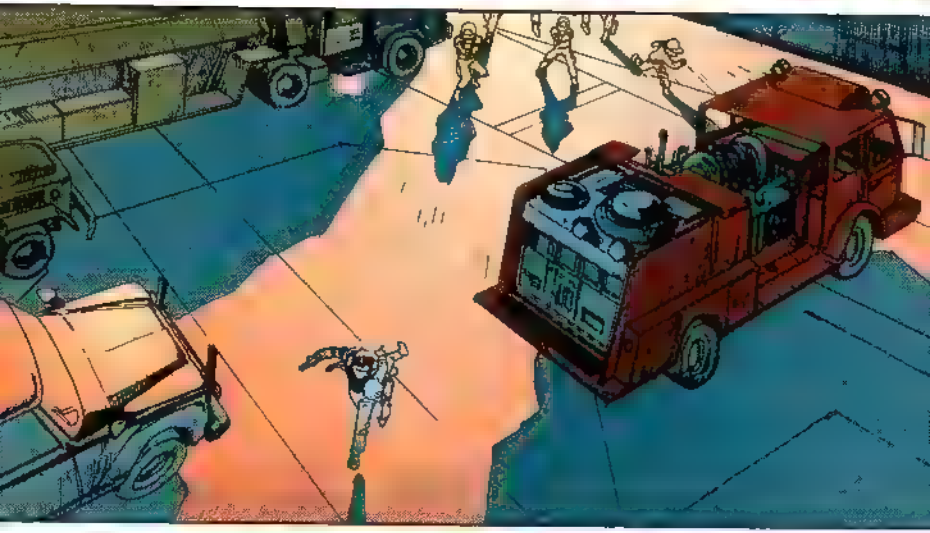
OH!!
THIS WAY! QUICKLY!
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
I THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING!
BRING A LIGHT!
BREAK OUT THE INFRA-RED!
!
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
THEY'RE IN THE SHOPPING MALL!
COME ON! THE OTHER UNIT HAS FOUND THEM!

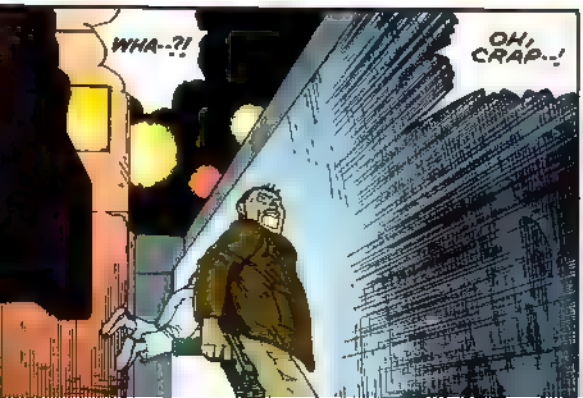
BY THE WAY...
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU PEOPLE?
THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW!!
JUST WHO ARE YOU, AND WHAT'S YOUR CONNECTION TO THE LITTLE GUY?
YOU MEAN THAT PINT-SIZED FREAK?
NOT THAT IT MATTERS. I CAN'T LET YOU GO NOW
COME WITH ME.
MY PLEASURE!
SNAP
BLAM BLAM

KYAAAA!
KRUNK
BOK
BREEN
:NGHK:
KRINK
BLAST!
THOK
CHUNK CHUNK
GET ACROSS THE BRIDGE! RUN!!


HALT
NO VEHICLES PERMITTED PAST THIS POINT
WARNING
BUDDABL
DABUDDA


WE'VE RECEIVED WORD HE'S PINNED DOWN BY THE CANAL IN THE EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT, SIR.
WHEN IS MASARU EXPECTED?
HIS ETA IS TWENTY MINUTES.
THUNK
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?! GO!!
UHN
UHN
UHN

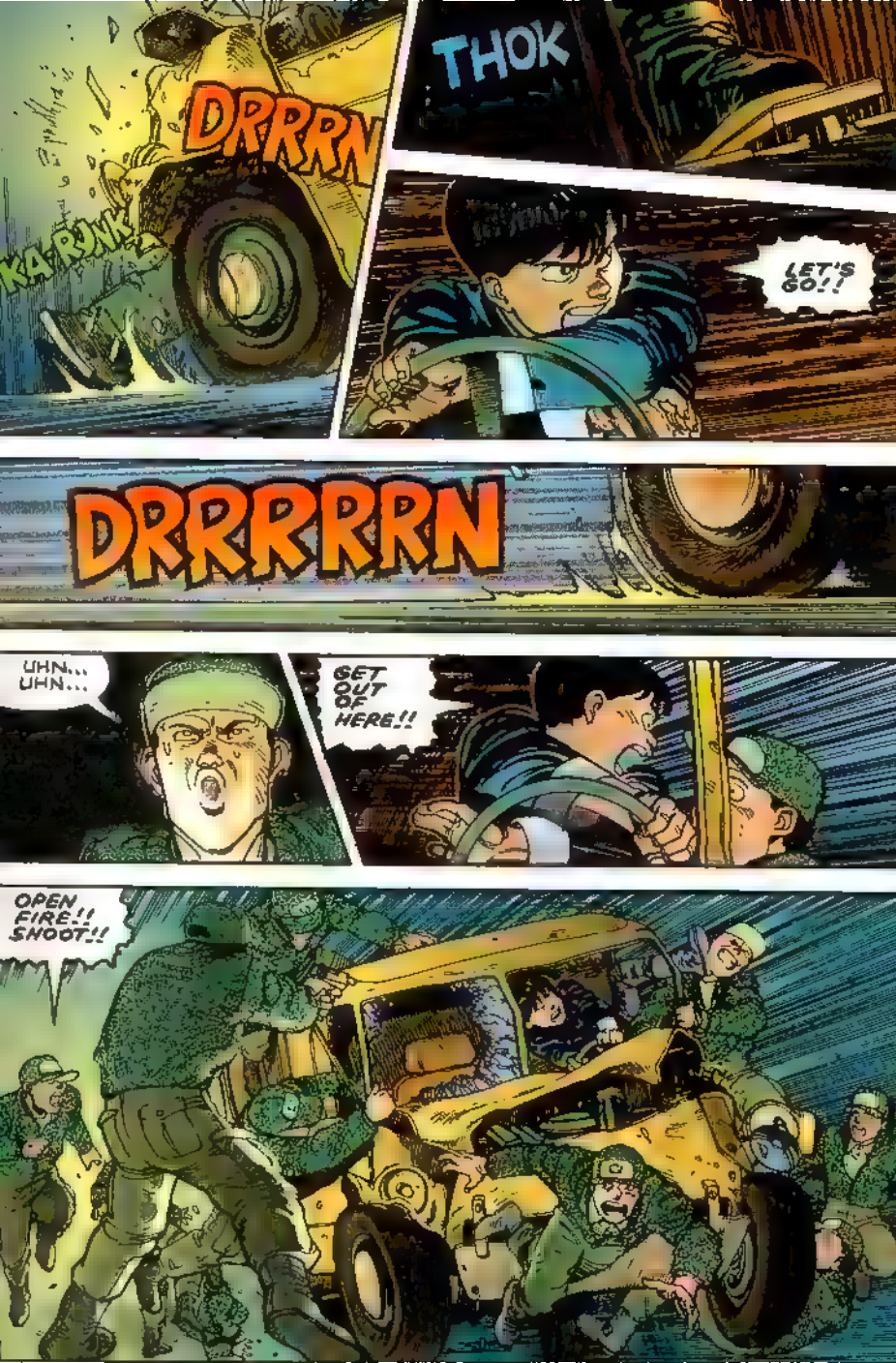



WHA--?!
OH, CRAP--!

UUUH

KRAK
BLAST IT!
KLIK
WE'RE FINISHED!
SKREEEEE
!
WHAT IN...?!
HALT! HALT!!
VROOM
YIPE!!

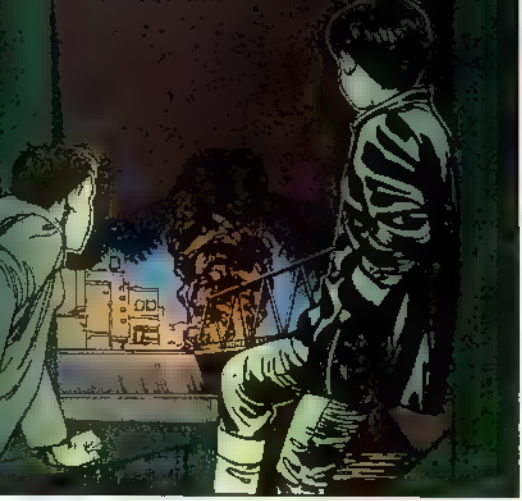
AA-OOOGA
WHAMO
魚
YOU'RE--!
GET IN!!
RYU! GET IN, HURRY!!
BANG
KAY?!?


DRRRN
KARUNK
THOK
LET'S GO!!
DRRRRRN
UHN... UHN...
GET OUT OF HERE!!
OPEN FIRE!! SHOOT!!

WUP
WUP
WUP
WUP
211-34
BE CAREFUL.

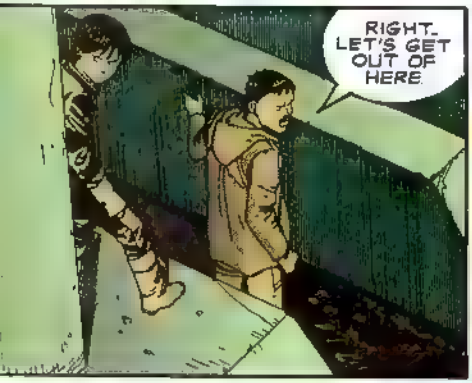
BUDDA BUDDA
WE'RE IN POSITION ON THE BRIDGE. THEY WON'T GET BY US!
HERE THEY COME!!
BUDDA BUDDA
READY... AIM...
BUDDABUDDABUDDA
魚銀

FIRE!!!
BLAM BLAM
LOOK OUT!
KARUNK
AIIEEE!
FWOOOM



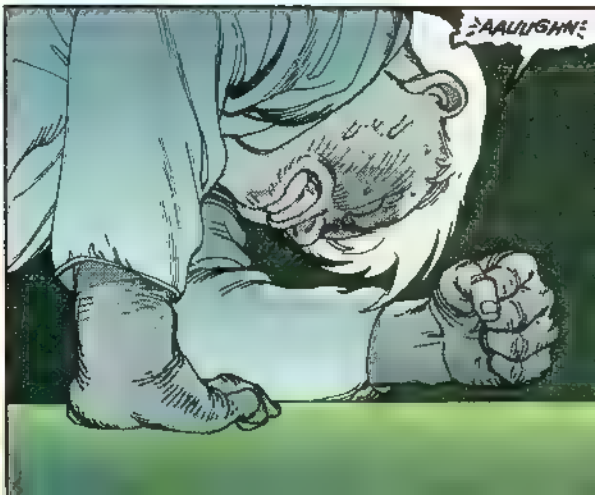
I SUPPOSE I OUGHT TO THANK YOU.

KEEP YOUR THANKS, MISTER. JUST REMEMBER YOU OWE ME ONE.


RIGHT. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

RYU, WAIT A MINUTE! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM!
LIKE WHAT, KAY?

HE'S SWEATING AND SHAKING LIKE A LEAF


AAUUGHN!

HEY--!
KRAK
YAIEE!!
THE WHOLE PLACE IS COMING DOWN!
YOU-YOU'RE... YOU'RE DOING IT, AREN'T YOU?
!

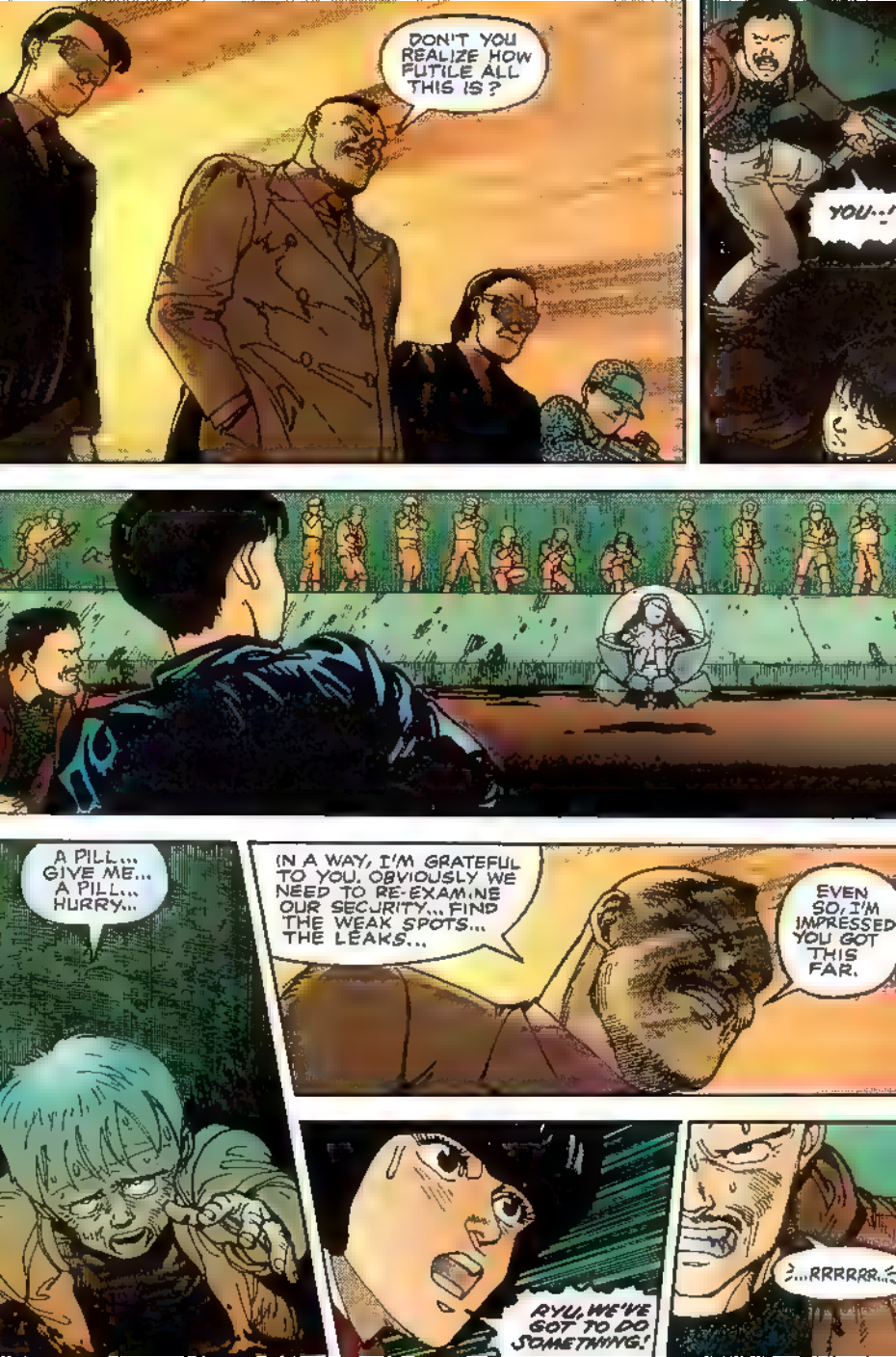
HUNH?
!
WHAT'S THAT?
IS IT THE ARMY?
TA... KA... SHI

!
TAKASHI --?!
IS THAT YOUR NAME?!
I'VE COME TO TAKE YOU BACK.
WE'RE NOT LIKE THE OTHERS... WE CAN'T LIVE OUTSIDE.
COME WITH ME... COME HOME...

HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
...A PILL ...GIVE ME...
TAKASHI...
IS THAT REALLY YOUR NAME... TAKASHI?!?
HFF
HFF
BUT... IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN YOU'RE NOT... WE THOUGHT YOU...

AKIRA...?
NO. I AM NOT.
!
?
HEY!!
AND JUST HOW DID YOU LEARN OF AKIRA?
WHO ARE YOU?!

UH-OH...
TOKKA TOKKA TOKKA TOKKA
BLAST IT!
WE'RE SURROUNDED!
CRAP!
STOP!!!


DON'T YOU REALIZE HOW FUTILE ALL THIS IS?
YOU...!
A PILL... GIVE ME... A PILL... HURRY...
IN A WAY, I'M GRATEFUL TO YOU. OBVIOUSLY WE NEED TO RE-EXAMINE OUR SECURITY... FIND THE WEAK SPOTS... THE LEAKS...
EVEN SO, I'M IMPRESSED YOU GOT THIS FAR.
RYU, WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!
...RRRRRR...

HUNH
HUNH
GIVE ME THE GUN!!
RIGHT...
THOK
EEAAIEE!!
EH...?
BLOOSH
SPLASH
FREEZE, SUCKERS!!

COLONEL--!
YOU'RE BEING VERY FOOLISH.
I DON'T WANNA HEAR IT!
FOR SOME REASON, THIS LITTLE CREEP'S IMPORTANT TO YOU!
AND THIS GUN I'M HOLDING HAS A HAIR-TRIGGER.
YOU STILL REFUSE TO UNDERSTAND? VERY WELL...
MASARU...
COLONEL... TAKASHI IS IN A VERY BAD WAY
PRECISELY.
SPEED IS OF THE ESSENCE... AND GUNS ARE OF NO USE NOW.

KNOCK OFF THE CHATTER UP THERE! IF YOU LET US GO, THE FREAK'S ALL YOURS!
TRUST ME... WE WON'T REALLY HURT YOU.
SO WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?
HE NEEDS A PILL...
ABSOLUTELY NOT!!
HERE GOES...
A PILL...
.....
TAKASHI...
MASARU...

SO, I GUESS WE'LL BE GOING.
MASARU!
HEY, MASARU, OR WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS... WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?
GET LOST IF YOU CARE ABOUT YOUR FRIEND HERE.
?!
SHOOOSH
!

KA SLOOSH
!
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU--?!
STOP THAT!!
I-I CAN'T HELP MYSELF!!
THEN I'VE NO CHOICE!
OH--!
THAK
STOP IT!!
NOW, LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN!

KRAK
!
YIPE!!
AAAAAAGH!!!
KABRAAK

SPLAT
YAAAAH!
SPLUTCH
KAY! MOVE!!
AAAAAH!

KROOM
THEY MUSTN'T ESCAPE!!
GET THEM!
SHOOT!
SHOOT!

SPLUT
KICK
KOF
KOF
Pish
TAKASHI, YOUR PILL--!
CATCH!!
Pi-t
AH--!
TIK
TAK
THUP
!

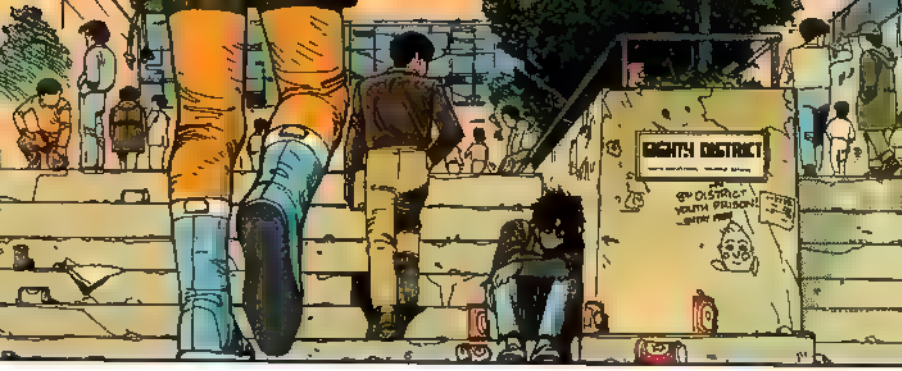
IF YOU WANT IT, COME AN' GET IT!
WHAM
RUN!!
WHOA!
KRAK
RUN FOR IT!!

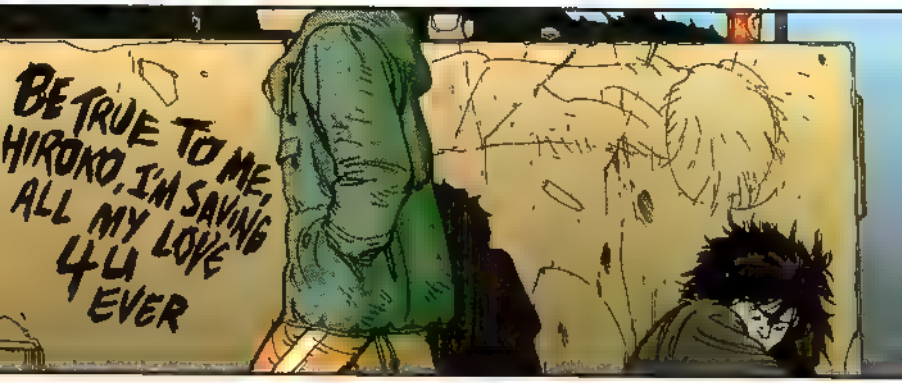
THAT BOY, KANEDA.. DID HE..?
HUF HUF HUF
!
WE CAN'T WORRY ABOUT HIM NOW!
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA

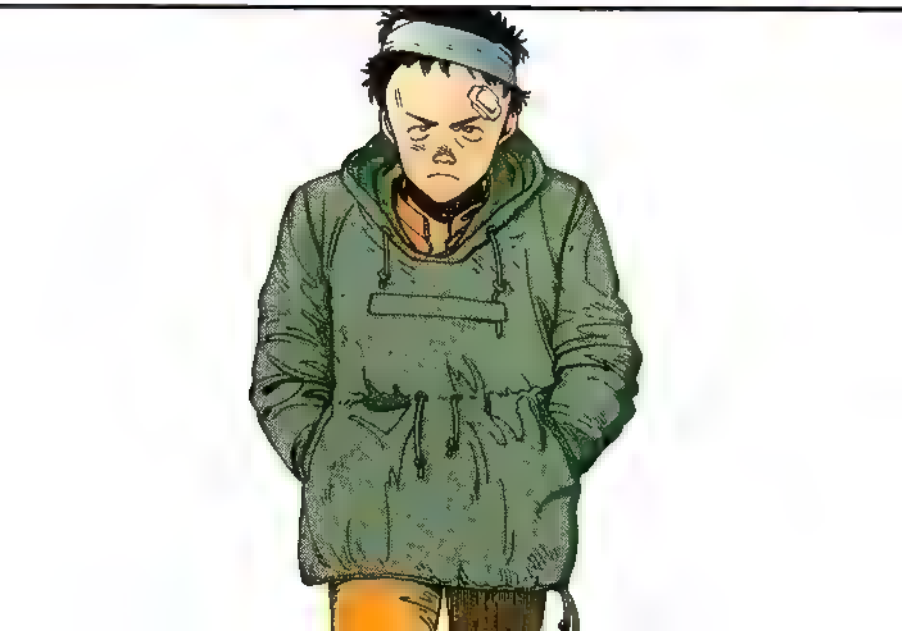
IS... IS IT OVER?
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF

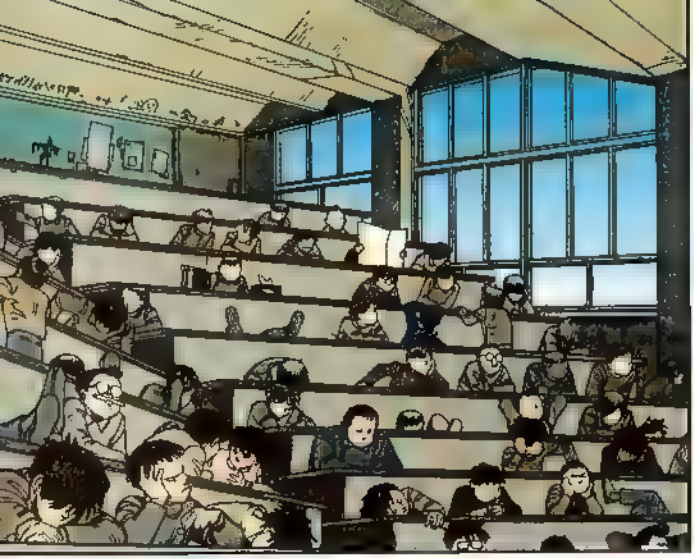
SOUND OFF!
BUDDABUD
I WANT A FULL HEAD COUNT! ANYONE WHO'S STILL ON HIS FEET, GO AFTER THEM!
ALL THE WOUNDED ARE TO BE TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL!
WHAT?!? MASARU...
YOU LET HIM... STEAL...
...THE CAPSULE?!

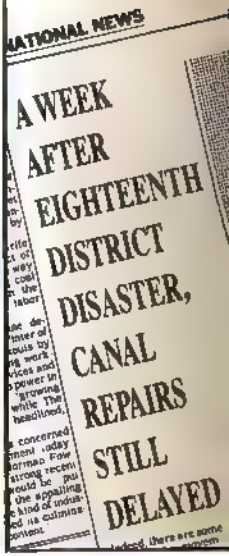
GLOOSH
GLOOSH
GLOOSH
GLOOSH
SMAK
WHAT A NIGHT...
WHAT A MESS...
GLOOSH
AH...
GLOOSH
AAH--
--CHOOO!!!

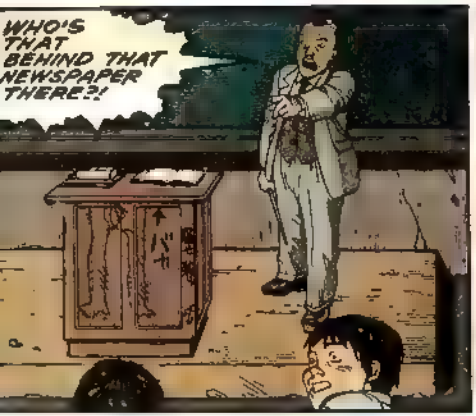

EIGHTY DISTRICT
6TH DISTRICT YOUTH PRISON


BE TRUE TO ME, HIROKO. I'M SAVING ALL MY LOVE 4U EVER






NATIONAL NEWS
A WEEK AFTER EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT DISASTER, CANAL REPAIRS STILL DELAYED

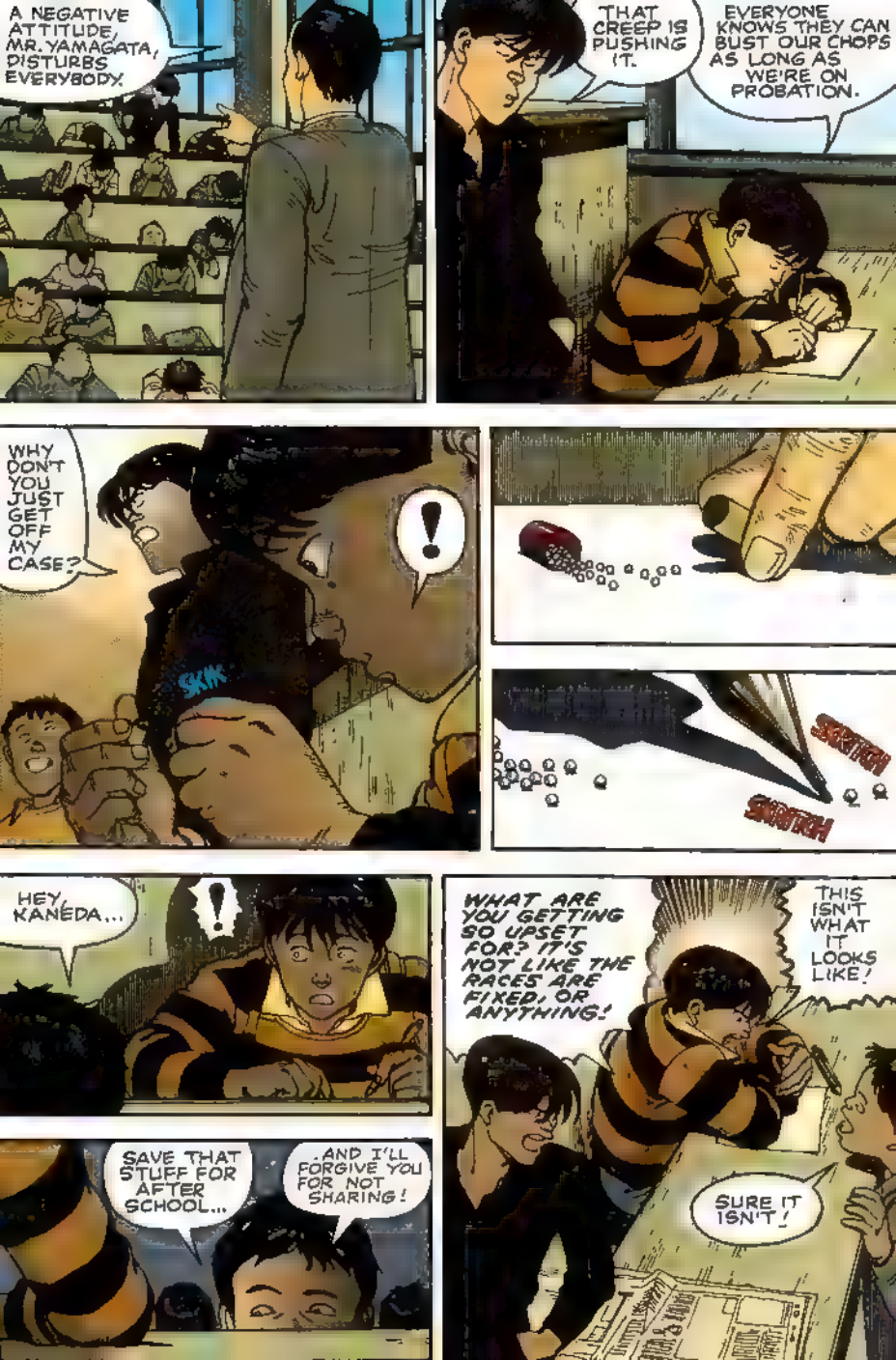

WHO'S THAT BEHIND THAT NEWSPAPER THERE?!

WHO WANTS TO KNOW?

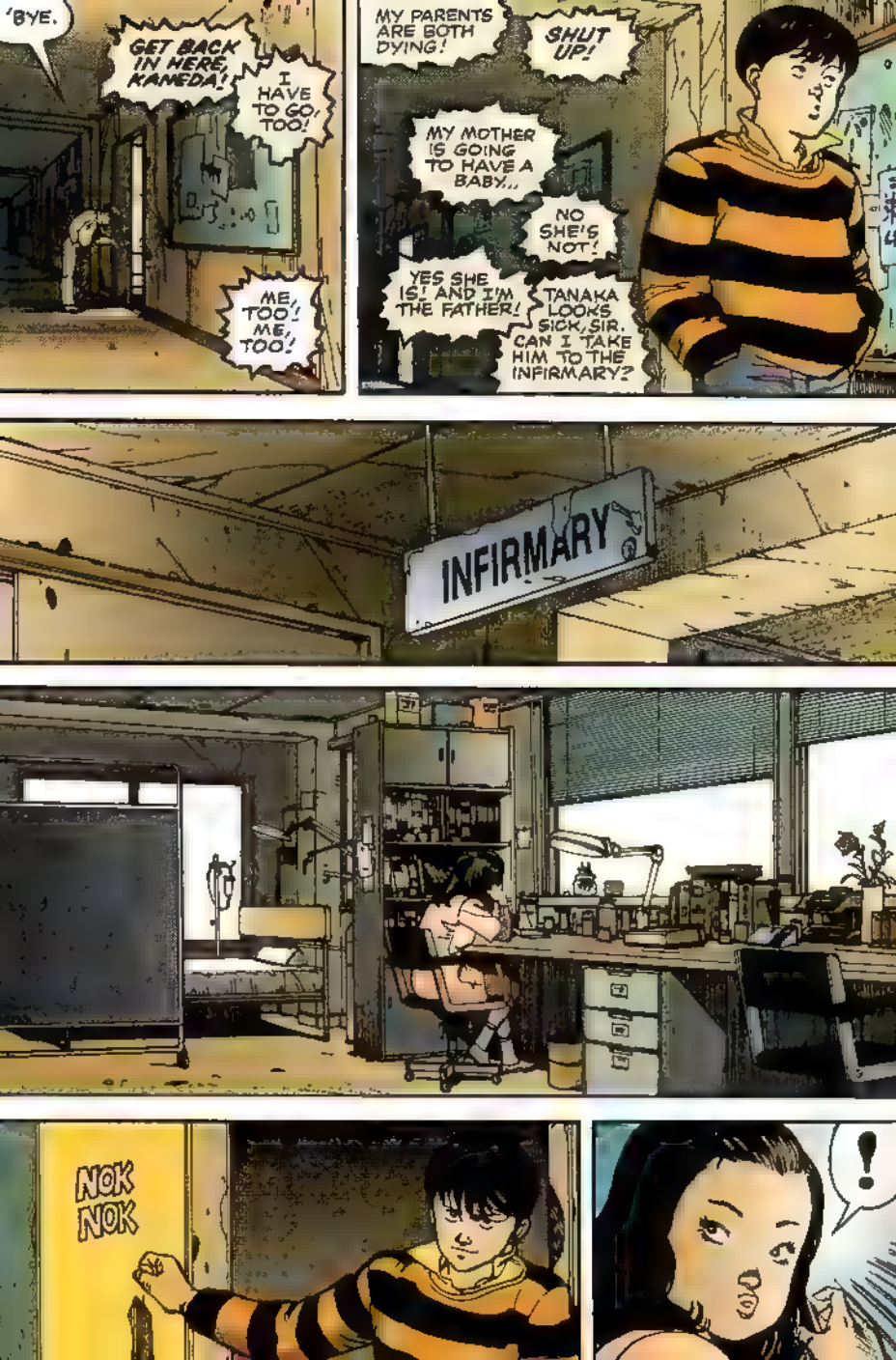
MISTER YAMAGATA, I AM TRYING TO CONDUCT A CLASS HERE!

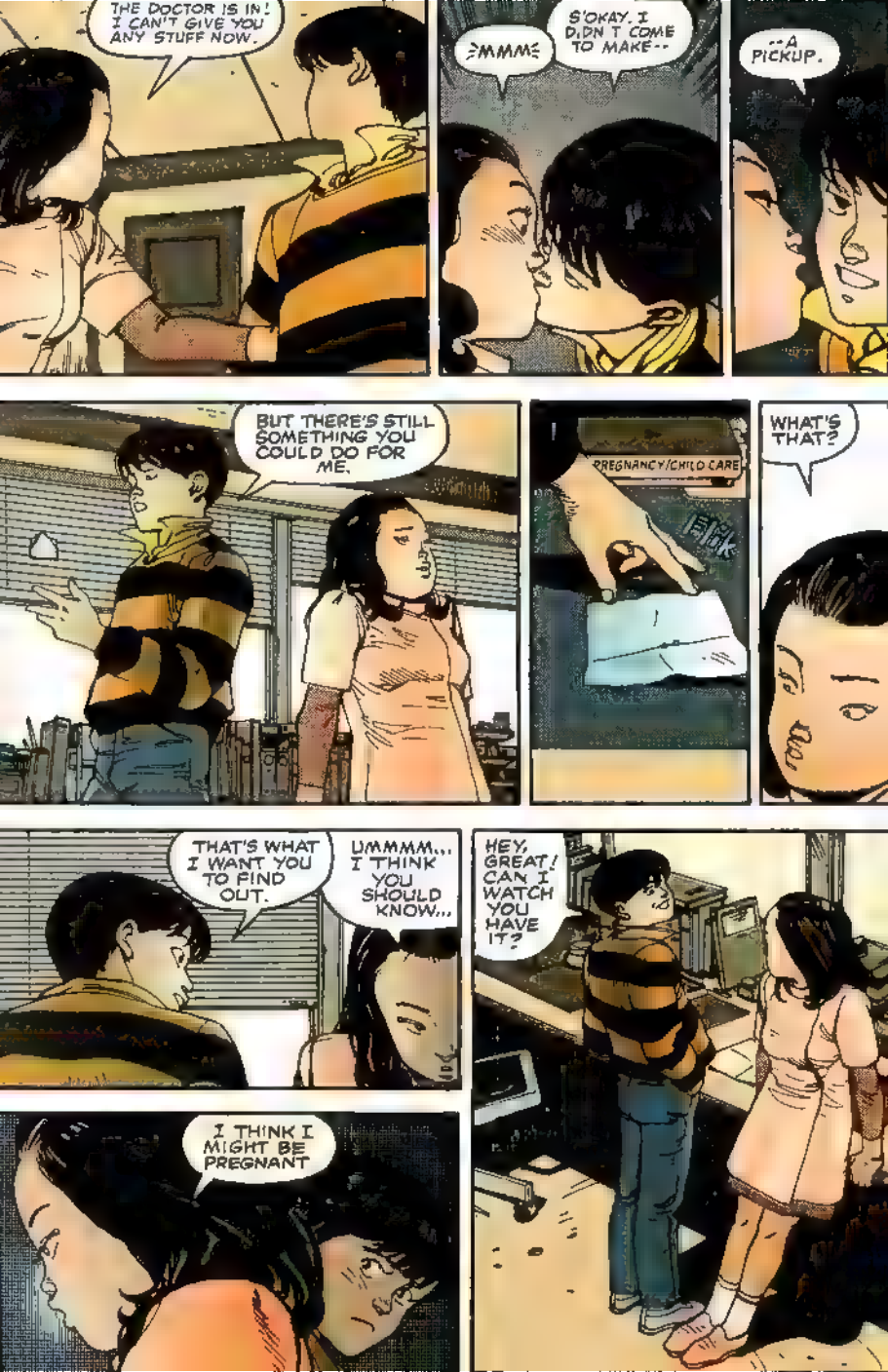
AND I'M TRYING TO READ YESTERDAY'S RACE RESULTS, SO COULD YOU PLEASE KEEP IT DOWN?

YOU D THINK I WAS CREATING A DISTURBANCE OR SOMETHING, THE WAY YOU'RE CARRYING ON!


A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE, MR. YAMAGATA, DISTURBS EVERYBODY.
THAT CREEP IS PUSHING IT.
EVERYONE KNOWS THEY CAN BUST OUR CHOPS AS LONG AS WE'RE ON PROBATION.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET OFF MY CASE?
!
SKIK
SKITCH
SKITCH
HEY, KANEDA...
!
WHAT ARE YOU GETTING SO UPSET FOR? IT'S NOT LIKE THE RACES ARE FIXED, OR ANYTHING!
THIS ISN'T WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!
SURE IT ISN'T!
SAVE THAT STUFF FOR AFTER SCHOOL...
...AND I'LL FORGIVE YOU FOR NOT SHARING!

ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH GAMBLING?!
OF COURSE NOT. JUST WITH LOSING I'M OUT TEN BUCKS THIS WEEK.
HEY, KANEDA, GIVE ME SOME!
I ALREADY TOLD YOU...
THE NEXT THING YOU'RE GOING TO BE OUT OF IS THIS SCHOOL... AND ON YOUR WAY TO REFORM SCHOOL.
IF THAT HAPPENS, YOUR TEETH ARE GONNA BE OUT OF YOUR MOUTH!
I SUPPOSE IT'S MEDICINE.
YEAH, COUGH MEDICINE.
Y'SEE, BASICALLY...
SORRYSIR IGOTTAGO!
ZIP
WH-WH-WH-WHAT?!
SIT DOWN, MR. KANEDA!
NEVER MIND ME, SIR. JUST GO ON WITH CLASS.


'BYE.
GET BACK IN HERE, KAMEDA!
I HAVE TO GO, TOO!
ME, TOO! ME, TOO!
MY PARENTS ARE BOTH DYING!
SHUT UP!
MY MOTHER IS GOING TO HAVE A BABY...
NO SHE'S NOT!
YES SHE IS! AND I'M THE FATHER!
TANAKA LOOKS SICK, SIR. CAN I TAKE HIM TO THE INFIRMARY?
INFIRMARY
NOK NOK
!


THE DOCTOR IS IN! I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANY STUFF NOW.
:MMM:
S'OKAY. I DIDN'T COME TO MAKE--
--A PICKUP.
BUT THERE'S STILL SOMETHING YOU COULD DO FOR ME.
PREGNANCY/CHILD CARE
WHAT'S THAT?
THAT'S WHAT I WANT YOU TO FIND OUT.
UMMMM... I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW...
I THINK I MIGHT BE PREGNANT
HEY, GREAT! CAN I WATCH YOU HAVE IT?

TROMP TROMP
TROMP TROMP
THERE YOU ARE!!
INFIRMA
SKRSSHH
KANEDA!! TETSUO'S BACK!
REALLY?!
BE RIGHT THERE!!
AH...
LISTEN...

I'LL BE BACK LATER FOR THE USUAL GOODIES
CHECK ON THAT NEW STUFF BY THEN, OKAY?
SEE YOU.
SIT DOWN THIS INSTANT!!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!
ARE YOU REALLY ALL RIGHT?
SURE. IT WAS JUST A SCRATCH.

TETSUO!!
KANEDA!!
WHERE DID THEY TAKE YOU? WE LOOKED EVERYWHERE!
LET'S CELEBRATE!
YOU MADE IT!
PARTY TONIGHT!!
I'M SUPPOSED TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL AT SEVEN...
FORGET IT!!
HOOSRAAY
KRASH
YOU SAID IT WAS JUST A SCRATCH!
I'LL GIVE A POP QUIZ
I THOUGHT SO!
THAT'S WHAT I FIGURED!
YOU'LL BE SORRY

LET'S GO!!
VVRRRNNN
STILL NO SIGN OF KANEDA?
HE WENT TO GET THE DRUGS.
VRRRNNN
YOU AIN'T WRONG.
CAN'T HAVE A PARTY WITHOUT FAVORS...

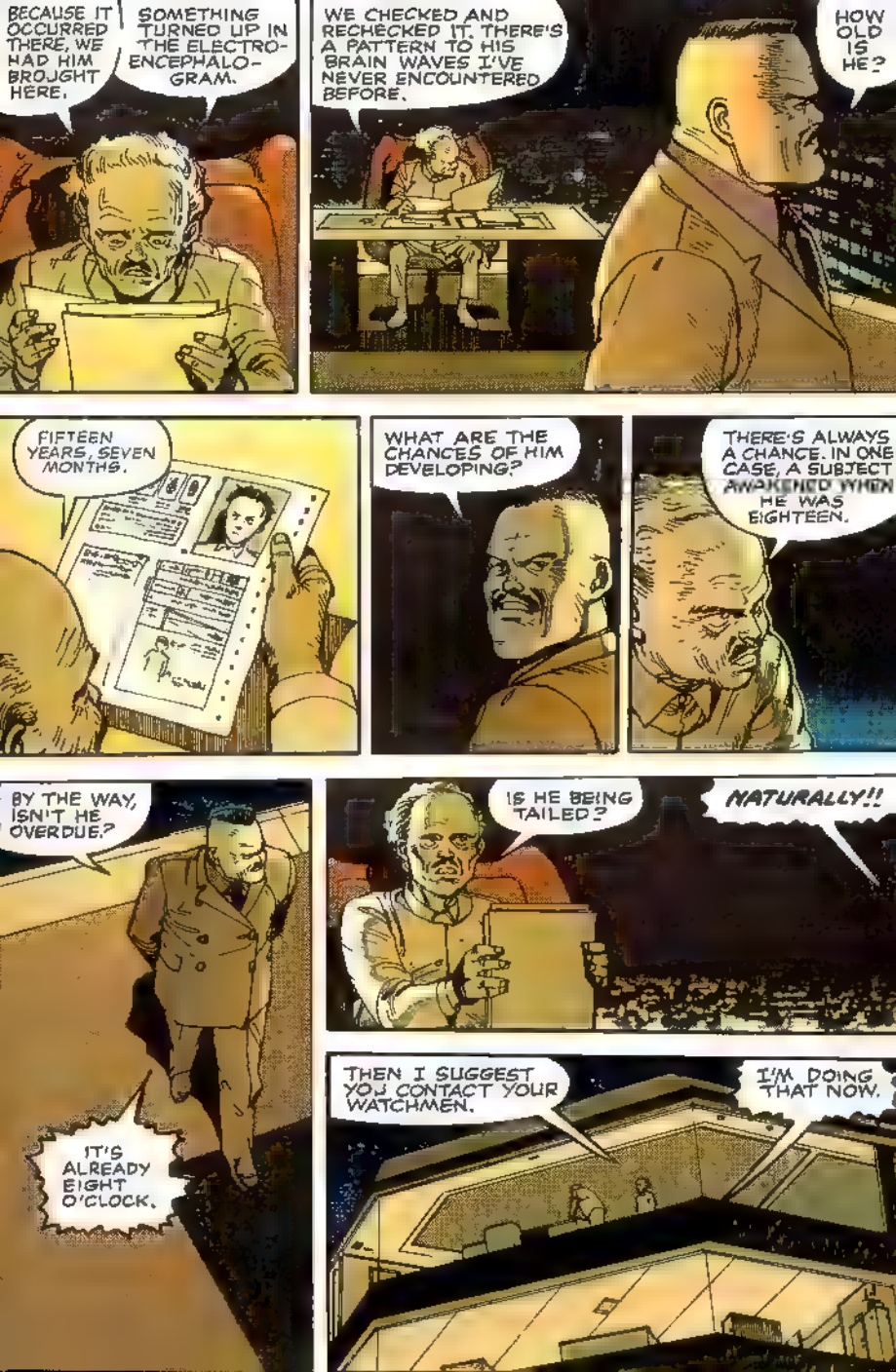
WHERE DID THAT STUFF YOU GAVE ME EARLIER COME FROM?
DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT IT IS?
PART OF IT... BUT IT CONTAINED CERTAIN ELEMENTS THAT DEFIED ANALYSIS, AT LEAST BY OUR EQUIPMENT.
SO, DON'T KEEP ME IN SUSPENSE. THE GANG IS STILL WAITING FOR THEIR STUFF, YOU KNOW.
COMPARED TO WHAT WAS IN YOUR PILL THOSE ARE CANDY. ONE GRAIN OF THAT IS FIVE TIMES AS POWERFUL AS THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF THAT BAG
WHAT?
IF SOMEONE TOOK THE WHOLE THING, HE'D GO MAD... OR DIE.
HHMMM...
ONE MORE THING...

IT'S CONTROLLED UNDER REGULATION SIXTY-SEVEN.
WHICH MEANS ...?
THE PUBLIC DOESN'T HAVE ACCESS TO IT. THERE'S NO LEGAL WAY A PRIVATE CITIZEN CAN GET THIS DRUG.
WHAT ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT? SOMETIMES IT'S SURPRISING WHO GETS INVOLVED IN--
--SOMETHING ILLEGITIMATE!
UH, WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, KANEDA?
I THINK MAYBE...
...IT'S A MONSTER SEDATIVE... FOR A MONSTER.

GULP
POP
CHOMP
LET'S GO!!
YEAAHH!!!
RAK
VVRRRRN
:GULPS
LIKE THE NEW BIKE?
IT'S GREAT. WHERE'D YOU GET IT?
OH..SOMEONE LEFT IT IN THE STREET.
THOUGHT SO.

VVVRRRRNNNN
VVVRRRRNNNN
VROOM VROOM
8TH DISTRICT
8TH DISTRICT YOUTH PRISON

HIS NAME IS TETSUO SHIMA, COLONEL.
HE ATTENDS THE EIGHTH DISTRICT VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL.
AND HE WAS HURT..
...IN THE ACCIDENT TAKASHI CAUSED THE NIGHT HE ESCAPED... ON THE HIGHWAY IN THE OLD CITY...


BECAUSE IT OCCURRED THERE, WE HAD HIM BROUGHT HERE.
SOMETHING TURNED UP IN THE ELECTRO-ENCEPHALO-GRAM.
WE CHECKED AND RECHECKED IT. THERE'S A PATTERN TO HIS BRAIN WAVES I'VE NEVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE.
HOW OLD IS HE?
FIFTEEN YEARS, SEVEN MONTHS.
WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF HIM DEVELOPING?
THERE'S ALWAYS A CHANCE. IN ONE CASE, A SUBJECT AWAKENED WHEN HE WAS EIGHTEEN.
BY THE WAY, ISN'T HE OVERDUE?
IT'S ALREADY EIGHT O'CLOCK.
IS HE BEING TAILED?
NATURALLY!!
THEN I SUGGEST YOU CONTACT YOUR WATCHMEN.
I'M DOING THAT NOW.

EEEK!!
RRRNNNN
WHAT'S UP?
WHERE'S TETSUO?
!
BARRRMM
THEY DIDN'T KEEP YOU LONG!

HEADS UP!
AAOOOOOOO
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE GONNA SHOW...
YEAH!
READY OR NOT, HERE THEY COME!!
VVVRRRRRRRNN
OUT OF THE WAY!
LET ME THROUGH!!
CLEAR THE PATH!!
FORGET IT. WE'RE ALL STUCK HERE. THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO!

NEXT ISSUE: **NUMBER 41!**

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

The creator of **Akira** was born in April of 1954 in Japan's Miyagi Prefecture, an agricultural and fishing province some 400 kilometers northeast of Tokyo. He grew up there and attended Sanjuma High School, which, for a rural school, seems particularly favored by the comic book muse. Another prominent comics artist, **Yoji Kamata,** is also a graduate, and, some years earlier, one of Japan's most famous comics creators, **Shotaro Ishinomori,** known world-wide for his **Cyborg 009, Kamen Rider,** and current best-seller, **Japan Inc.**

In high school, Otomo became, in his own words, "crazy about the movies." American films of the period in particular seemed to be capturing the new spirit of youthful unrest and rebellion all over the world. Movies such as **Bonnie and Clyde, Easy Rider, Five Easy Pieces,** and **The Strawberry Statement** had particular impact upon him at the time and some of their sensibility can still be detected in **Akira** and other work.

Soon after graduating high school in 1973, Otomo moved to Tokyo. His goal was to become a comics artist. He achieved this in August of 1973 when his first published work, an adaptation of the **Prosper Mérimée** short novel **Mateo Falcone,** appeared in the weekly comics magazine, **Action.**

Over the next few years, Otomo created a number of short stories in comics form. These would range from twenty to thirty pages, about the length of a full comic in the U.S. But in Japan it is not unusual for an ongoing comics story to run to a thousand pages or more. Customarily, stories first appear in serialized segments of twenty to thirty pages in a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly comics magazine and then, if popular, are collected into books of around 200 pages. During this period, Otomo's pieces were most regularly appearing in **Action** magazine. Later, they were collected into book form beginning with **Short Piece** in 1979. This collection was followed by **Highway Star** (October 1979), **Good Weather** (March 1981), and **Boogie Woogie Waltz** (May 1982).

Having achieved a promising degree of success and attention with these short works, Otomo began to apply his skills to longer material. In 1979, publication began on **Fire Ball,** a story built around a human versus mega-computer theme. Though it appeared in a limited circulation magazine and is, to date, still uncompleted, **Fire Ball** marked the beginning of Otomo's interest in the science-fiction action genre and established his following among high school and college students deeply addicted to the visual culture. **Fire Ball** was the natural forerunner of Otomo's two most acclaimed works, **Domu** and **Akira.**

Domu is a story centering upon the conflict between two residents of a modern day high rise apartment building. One is an old man, the other a little girl. Each possesses deadly psychic powers and the mounting duel has devastating consequences

for all around them. **Domu** began serialization in January of 1980 and continued for almost two years. When completed, it was revised by Otomo and issued in book form in August of 1983. **Domu** was an instant best seller as well as a subject of some controversy. It created a stir when it won Japan's science-fiction Grand Prix of 1983 for best s-f novel, the first time the prize had been awarded to a comics work.

The success of this 230 page graphic novel led Otomo to undertake an even more ambitious project which, when completed, would number some 1800 pages. As a place to launch this new work, he chose **Young Magazine** published by **Kodansha Ltd.** The bi-weekly magazine had been struggling to win the same high school-college student audience that Otomo perceived as the most aware and sensitive readership for the new directions he worked to achieve. The work was, of course, **Akira** and with its tradition-breaking appearance the circulation of **Young Magazine** began to rise. Today it is over one million. Each collected volume of **Akira** released in book form broke new ground in terms of format and price as well as in enthusiastic reader reaction. Four have appeared to date. The fifth and final volume is planned for Spring of 1989. When completed, the saga will have a total of three million copies in print.

Along with other comics work —such as **Sayonara Nippon** (Good-bye Japan), a tragi-comic story of a Japanese karate expert's failed attempt to become a hero in New York, **Kibun-wa mo Senso** (Feel Like War), based upon an original script by **Toshihiko Yahagi** about a Japanese youth in China during World War III, and **Henzeru-to-Gureteru** (Hanzel and Gretel), a collection of parodies on **Grimm's Fairy Tales** and other classics— Otomo has remained interested and involved in film.

In 1982, he took about six months off to make his own sixteen millimeter film, **Jyu-O Warerani** (Give Me a Gun, Give Me Freedom). He produced it without any commercial backing, casting it with his own friends. When finished, it played at Kinokuniya Hall, a Tokyo theater for avant garde plays and films. Otomo has also continued to work in animated film as well as television commercials for such clients as Suntory, Canon, and Honda. Currently he has just completed the animated movie of **Akira** for which he acted as director, scenarist, designer and illustrator.

In Japan, there is a great deal of speculation about just where the title name of **Akira** originates (American readers have several issues to go before this character actually makes an appearance). There are those who assume it is homage to one of Otomo's favorite movie directors, **Akira Kurosawa.** Others have claimed it is the name of a drinking buddy of Otomo's from years ago. But Otomo himself never gives an answer. He just laughs. And the speculation, like interest in the series itself, continues to grow.

Information supplied by Young Magazine

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As earth recovers from World War III, strange new events are shaping in Neo-Tokyo. A pursuit has begun. Its object is a wizened face child with incredible telekinetic powers and the mark Number 26 on his palm. He holds clues to something prized and feared. Something or someone called...AKIRA. Two pursuers are the mysterious girl, Kay, and her companion, Ryu. Opposing them are troops of a secret government force. Swept along is the rebellious young motorcycle gang leader, Kaneda. Attracted to Kay and angry with Number 26 for the injury of a friend, Kaneda becomes part of the violent cat-and-mouse game which leads into the city's sewer system and a showdown with two new players...The Colonel and Masaru, Number 27.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

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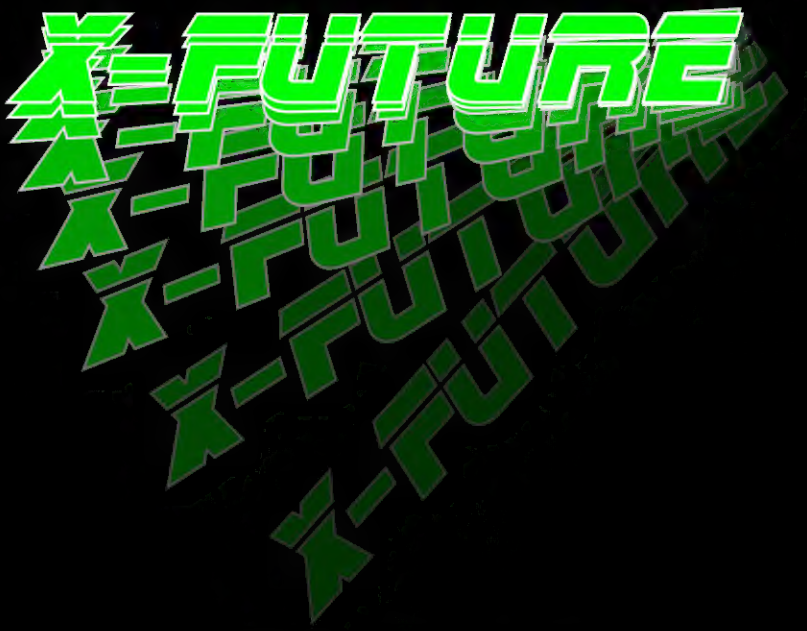

I love um

I buy um

I preserve um

YES, SIR...
CLEAR THE WAY!!
YES, SIR... BUT TRAFFIC IS COMPLETELY BLOCKED, SIR...
YES, SIR. I UNDERSTAND... GET HIM BACK.
SKREEEEE
VVVRRRWN